

# End-of-Life Care and Advance Directives

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### 1. Introduction

- End-of-life care focuses on comfort, dignity, and quality of life for people with terminal illness.
- Advance directives let patients state their wishes for future care if they lose capacity.

### 2. Goals of End-of-Life Care

- Relieve pain and distressing symptoms through palliative care.
- Provide emotional, spiritual, and family support.
- Respect patient values and preferences.

### 3. Advance Directives

- **Living will:** a document stating which treatments a person does or does not want.
- **Durable power of attorney:** appoints a proxy to make decisions on the patient's behalf.
- Directives guide care when the patient can no longer communicate.

### 4. Ethical Considerations

- Balancing autonomy with beneficence near the end of life.
- Distinguishing withholding or withdrawing treatment from euthanasia.

### 5. Communication

- Honest, compassionate discussion of prognosis and options is essential.
- Families should be involved while respecting the patient's wishes.

### 6. Summary

- End-of-life care prioritises comfort, dignity, and respect for patient choices.
- Advance directives ensure those choices are honoured when capacity is lost.